

# Letters to the Editor

*Ed. Note: Ben Coniam was in a near-fatal crash in 2004 and credits Schertz EMS and his medical care at Brooke Army Medical Center with his miraculous recovery. Ben and his parents wanted to add more to the story that ran in the last issue about the crash. Today Ben is studying for his master's degree in psychology and has fully recovered.*

## To Texas EMS Magazine:

When the Schertz Police first arrive on the scene of the accident they think it is over for this crash victim. But a gasp from the patient sends the Schertz emergency responders into high gear. The Schertz Fire Department uses the Jaws of Life to carefully cut the young man from the vehicle without causing any more trauma. Schertz EMS takes over. The young man is so severely injured they know the outcome may be grim, but they are his only hope of survival. He has an obvious break to the femur, but the airway and neck are also of grave concern. It's obvious there are internal injuries. The weather does not allow for air transport so Schertz EMS takes him, identity unknown, by ambulance to the Level I Trauma Center at Brooke Army Medical Center, where he's turned over to the capable hands of the trauma team there. Most EMS crews' involvement ends there – they never know the outcome of the patient they transport. Schertz EMS finds the name and phone number of the patient and leaves a message inquiring about his condition. Schertz EMS gets a call back from the family. The patient, Ben Coniam, has a broken neck, closed head trauma, facial fractures, a ruptured spleen, collapsed lungs, multiple rib fractures, hip and pelvic fractures, a brutal break of the right femur, internal injuries, and multiple external injuries from glass. But

*Ben Coniam spent two years undergoing rehab after he left the hospital. Today, he's studying for a master's degree in psychology and spends time with his daughter, Annie.*



he has survived. In the hospital, he develops pneumonia, a blood infection and other complications but after three weeks in the ICU, Ben goes home to his daughter Annie, his parents and sister. There will be two more years of rehabilitation and surgery.

While Ben rehabs, he sees an article in the local paper about the Schertz EMS 30th anniversary celebration with an open invitation to any former patients. Ben is determined to make it there and thank them. Still in a wheelchair, Ben is given a rousing welcome once crews find out who he is. Ben has a long road of recovery, surgery and rehabilitation ahead, but he knows he has that chance at life thanks to Schertz EMS and others who worked on him that night.

"The people that work so hard for Schertz have always been very humble and insisted that they were just doing their jobs, but saving a life, saving my life, is much more than a job," Ben



says. "To my daughter, my family and myself it is a tremendous gift. That's why I keep coming back, I can't say thank you enough. The men and women of the Schertz EMS train and work hard to provide a service to the people of their community. We are all very lucky to have them."

*Ben Coniam  
Todd and Dawn Coniam  
Schertz*

## TEXAS EMS CERTIFICATIONS AS OF JUNE 09, 2008

ECA	3406
EMT	28844
EMT-I	3700
EMT-P	12585
LP	5615
TOTAL	54150
BASIC COORDINATOR	126
ADVANCED COORDINATOR	243
INSTRUCTOR	2072